A

CANADIAN EXCURSION

SUMMER OF 1885

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BY FREEMAN C. GRISWOLD.

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Autographs.

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MEMBERS OF PARTY.

Mrs. John D. McKnight,	Springfield, Mass.
Miss Elizabeth Lee Bowles,	" "
Miss Cornelia H. Harris,	" "
Miss Sophie Stebbins,	" "
Miss Mary G. Stebbins,	" "
Miss Lulu B. Whitcomb,	" "
Miss J. Lillian Doty,	New York City.
Miss J. Edith Larremore,	"
Miss Edith C. Brewer,	Hartford, Conn.
Mr. Will. F. Baker,	Springfield, Mass.
Mr. George D. Chamberlain,	" "
Mr. E. H. Hall,	" "
Mr. Frank B. Marsh,	" "
Mr. Fred H. Stebbins,	" "
Mr Walter G. Stebbins,	" "
Mr. A. Oatman,	Hartford, Conn.
Mr. Freeman C. Griswold,	Greenfield, Mass.

"Memory is the best historian, and what I bring you here are but as outline drawings, to which your own memories must impart the fullness of form, the richness of coloring, and the fairy tints which the scenes themselves possessed."

A CANADIAN EXCURSION.

It was on the evening of July 23rd, 1885, that one of the most remarkable travelling parties on record started from the City of Springfield with Quebec, the St. Lawrence and Saguenay rivers as their objective points.

Why impose on your historian the impossible task of setting down in cold words of lifeless prose all the events, incidents and adventures of this trip, which will live forever in your memories, which need no words of his to recall. But notwithstanding the uselessness of this effort your historian enters upon it as a pleasant duty, that he may himself live over again those happy hours before coming down to the dull common-places of hum-drum life.

A night of profound slumber, broken only by maidens' chattering and feasting, brought us to Newport, Vt., at the head of Lake Memphremagog, at which point we arrived at 6 A. M., all having arisen and dressed for the fray some two hours earlier. About an hour later we begin our regular early breakfast. I love to look back on that first buffet breakfast, apart from the appetizing morsels so promptly served, because it is associated in my mind with two things: first, those lovely new travelling dresses—not yet become common-place by constant use as walking, travelling and party costumes, (even the

celluloid collar of Mr. M. still fresh and crisp), no cruel spark or cinder as yet ravaging in their dainty folds, undressed kids not even hinting at holes or tears. We were indeed overpowered with the æsthetic shades of those costumes and rejoiced exceedingly at the small bags which the young ladies carried, knowing that we were to have no daily change of costume and that we were truly going in a direction away from Saratoga. I think even the girls were surprised to find how charming they could be with only one suit of clothes. Second, because Mr. C. and Mr. M. had not at that early meal formulated their afterwards celebrated "ticket system" of assigning partners at our various meals, a system so eminently fair and appropriate that there was no revolt until it was discovered that Messrs. C. and M. always drew prizes. But rising *en masse*, like the tides of the mighty river we were on, at the discovery of this barefaced plot, it was left to Miss H. and Mr. O., as representing the enraged party to arrange the seats not by a fortune so fickle, but by the more appropriate test of each one's inclination, in order, as Miss H. felicitously expressed it, "that they all might look *so* happy." It was the death blow to the "ticket system," and the course of true love ever after ran smoothly as we glided over the dark waters of Canadian rivers and regaled ourselves at the hospitable Canadian inns.

But I am digressing. Let us return to that July Friday morning as we go steaming down through the lovely valley of the Chaudiere to the storied City of Quebec. We are all in high spirits. We have just begun to get so well acquainted! Our minds are freighted with anticipations of pleasures in

store and delights *in præsenti;* no need of book or cigar or pack of cards to while away the time. The villages rush by, as if we were on the Pennsylvania Railroad instead of the slow-going Quebec Central. The darkey's songs even prove an interruption to our pleasure; and one in particular, (introducing to us a new member of our party, "Mr. Chingling,") provokes a look on the face of Miss H. more like a premature Lake Memphremagog thunder storm, than any other simile we have at hand. Why did we not have our photographer along to permanently preserve that glance? If he had been with us we could also have brought back with our other souvenirs the following views: Mr. H.'s shine; Mr. M. and Miss L. in their sheol representation; Mr. C. as the Knight of the hammock; Miss D. as the Sleeping six o'clock beauty; your historian in the act of taking a lesson in French or searching for a straw hat in the deep black waters of the Saguenay; but enough, we only had our photographer with us as far as Brattleboro, and the fickle photographer of memory, aided by imagination is all we have.

We are in Quebec! Allow my Connecticut Valley muse for one instant to try and raise herself into the misty, cloudy heights of this lovely scene. Alas! how can she appreciate or describe the scene that bursts upon our vision. There stands the famous, mighty city. She bids defiance to the world. Two giant rivers intersect each other at her feet, and yet their mighty waves and currents and tides break along her base like little brooks—so grand she stands! What a peak! Well named Que-bec. But our muse falters and staggers and whispering, "how much grander than the Agawam," falls

back utterly worsted in her task. "It is France, not England, we are in," we exclaim as we mount the steep and narrow, winding streets. And so it seems. The people are attached to England only by weak Colonial bonds. They are still essentially French. They are Catholics. Their language, their customs and sympathies are mainly French. The statue is to Montcalm as well as Wolfe.

"Oh for a ride in that caleche," shouts Miss S., mistaking that modern American institution, the coach of the St. Louis Hotel for the single seated, tip-over looking vehicle, which is the prevailing conveyance of the city. She is pushed into the omnibus with more force than grace, and her face wears a puzzled, disappointed look all the way up the hill, to find that instead of riding alone with the handsome driver of the caleche she is obliged to ride with a lot of other girls as if she were in Springfield instead of Quebec.

Yankee enterprise makes some headway even in this medieval town. Although the descriptions written fifty years ago would need but little modification so slight has been the change, still American capital and enterprise are visible in their best hotel, in two or three successful manufacturing establishments, and in some other departments of trade and industry. But Quebec would not be Quebec if it was Chicago. We would not see it change, and fain would have removed the telegraph poles, which scaling the very Citadel, seemed a desecration and a blight. The dinner at the St. Louis Hotel was a great success. There was a certain indescribable dont-care-if-I-aint-shaved feeling in the air that gave a peculiar abandon to the meal. It lingers in our memory yet. It was perhaps not *our*

day but the historian thought he could foresee that he had a day coming. The rain falls; the fortune is told; and we are soon at Montmorency Falls.

Three hundred and sixty-seven multiplied by two equals how many? Ask Miss L. or Miss B——s. They will tell you more about it than the lazy historian, who seemed perfectly satisfied to chaperone a party of young ladies at the head of the stairs and shares with his companions in their gratification that this is one of the few things they *didn't* do.

That night was the only one when we retired before twelve o'clock, and even then one small party escaped the watchfulness of the chaperone and strolled out to view Quebec from the Esplanade by moonlight. There is no record of the hour of their return, but your historian imagines that, with Mr. C. for an escort, they must have returned very early—in the morning.

And now again my muse halts. Who could do justice to those halcyon days on the "Union?" Who can ever forget the varied panoramic beauties of that two hundred and fifty miles upon the St. Lawrence and Saguenay, or who can remember or relate them all?

For twelve hours we rode down the broadening waters and between the receding banks of the St. Lawrence. Recall those hours now, my gentle comrade, and seems it not like a single moment? Too soon the shades of evening close around us, and we are at the mouth of the Saguenay. With wonderful self-control we had denied ourselves the pleasure of singing until this point should be reached. It was therefore with a good deal of quiet satisfaction that we grouped ourselves on the forward deck just as our boat entered the Saguenay. The

passengers, most of them apprehending what was in store, prudently disappeared to other parts of the boat, save only the more hardy, who staid to listen to some of those old, familiar songs which are sung by young people whenever they get together on picnics, drives and excursions, and which they carry with them wherever they go, into every continent upon the globe.

But for a little while we could not sing, overpowered as we were by the grandeur and beauty of the scenery. Leaving the broad and mighty St. Lawrence we turn into the dark and narrow Saguenay, palisaded with high, rocky banks, its deep, black waters lit only by the rays of the full moon. All felt the inspiration of the moment; and as we proceeded further inland, fanned by the warm breezes, that now and then ruffled the surface of these romantic waters, it seemed as if the old saying *poeta nascitur non fit* might be reversed, if one could only be born and live along these now uninhabited shores.

But now we must sing. Mr. C. has his book of songs, and with all the dignity of a Sunday School superintendent, he marshals our little band for their first concert. I do not wish to criticize, but I must say that as a glee club we were not a success, though our glee as a club was unprecedented. We had scarcely finished our first effort over some well known Saxon melody when a little group of French ladies and gentlemen began to sing. What a contrast! Theirs were the words which charm and soothe. How inexpressibly appropriate the warm words of their Southern tongue to the scene around us. As our boat quietly glides up this never before visited stream anything which takes us back or reminds us of home seems

out of place, too cold and barren. The wild, wierd, romantic music of Offenbach, clothed in its native dress is at once in harmony with the surroundings, and floats out over the water with indescribably poetic beauty as we round some high, projecting promontory and skirt the echoing walls of rock.

I think my views may have been shared by others of the party, for soon, as though they could stand it no longer, our Sunday School class, in little groups, sought out sequestered parts of the boat. (Your historian is not informed how many engagements will date from this night. So far the only engagement which has come to his ears is the engagement of the President of the Monarch Parlor Car Co. as regular correspondent of the Springfield Union, and it is said that in consequence he, with his three daughters, Aida, Leonora and Annie, will make Springfield his permanent home.)

Your historian was now seized with a great feeling of loneliness and, for him, remarkable drowsiness. He sought the cabin and fell asleep and dreamed the following dream:

The boat had come to anchor in the middle of the moon-lit river, directly beneath the frowning battlements of Cape Eternity. This had been done at the request of Mr. M., who had remarked to the Captain that Saturday was "his day" and he intended to run this boat to suit himself. It was past midnight; the chaperone came to him and instead of requesting him to tell the young ladies to go to bed, she simply told him to bid them good night. What exquisite thoughtfulness. The hint was unheeded. Far out in the very prow of the boat sat Mr. W. S. and Miss W. counting stars and eating taffy. In a hammock swung out over the water sat Mr. F. S.

and two young ladies to whom he confided the secret that he intended to write a novel based on this trip. (Your historian wishes to remark, in brackets, that he has known Fred. for many years, and that his preoccupied air on this trip was something unusual and I verily believe that he was all the time collecting in his mind material for a modern society novel which might take rank as that much sought but never found desideratum—the great American novel.) Behind a boat in the stern sat a group of four, like a New Haven ham sandwich, Mr. C., Miss D., Mr. H. and Miss B——s. In all parts of the boat Mr. M. was to be discovered, accompanied by his fair companion, like Siamese twins. He dreamed that he could not find Mr. B. or Miss B——r, which so frightened him that he *almost* waked up. He dreamed that he saw Mr. O. and the fair remaining member of the party strolling alone, and then he *did* wake up. "What a blamed fool to go to sleep such a night as this," he exclaimed, and he sallied out from the cabin to see if his dream was true. He found it true to the letter! No wonder that he lost his hat overboard; no wonder that he sought to cool his distracted thoughts in the bottom of a boat; no wonder that he thought that this was no scene for a place like this, and remarked, "Well, Saturday is not my day and I'll put a great, black border round that day on my cards." But soon he grew more cheerful, and determined upon a serenade. Donning the garb of an ancient troubadour, the main feature of which consisted in a white handkerchief knotted over his exposed locks and putting his voice into good basso profundo condition, he stole around the boat and halting within a short distance of the several groups before mentioned, he

sang with great fervor and much expression the following song, to the tune of "Marching through Georgia:"

"Seems to me I hear a noise,
There's some one loitering near,
Let us through the midnight gloom diligently peer,
To see what dangerous characters are loitering here,
Under the cover of the darkness.
Chorus—Hollo, hollo, I think I apprehend,
Hollo, hollo, it's a case of mutual friend,
Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts as one that blend,
Under the cover of the darkness.

I wonder what it's best to do.
Should I interfere?
No, it's not my funeral, and that is very clear.
Think I ought to let them know I can overhear,
Under the cover of darkness."

His efforts were rewarded, and startled from their coverts, he succeeded in adjourning the crowd to the saloon, where all partook of an early morning lunch.

"What have I *ever* done," that I should be selected to describe what was, to me at any rate, an ideal Sunday. To be sure it was not like one of our beautiful New England Sabbaths, to which I am attached by all the sentiments of custom, habit and inherited instinct. But is there only one way to worship God? Is that the only true worship which eschews the glories of nature and substitutes the prosy words of the doctrinaire? If I have ever truly worshipped the omniscience of the Almighty it was when we sailed past those two awful, grand and terrible rocks, known as Cape Eternity and Cape Trinity. Our great steamer seemed like a little cockle-shell

beneath their shadow. Their very grandeur was intensified by the images of the Virgin and the cross planted on their summits. Did we scoff at the credulity and superstition of those who have placed these emblems there? No. We felt that faith and worship inspired their souls; and who of us should judge them! These great rocks preached to us the sermon of the insignificance of all men when with their pigmy minds they peer into the mysteries which hang around the grand and terrible objects of nature. Who will not say, with the poet, there are "books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Riviere du Loup is still fresh in our minds. Tadousac, with its buck-boards and its historic cathedral will never be forgotten. We do not know which to doubt the most, whether Parson Murray drove our buck-board over the rocky road or the tradition that the lamp which hangs in the little, old cathedral has been kept constantly burning for over two hundred years.

It was midnight, we had passed out into the St. Lawrence; we had reached Murray Bay; a stop of an hour was announced, and with our usual spirit of seeing everything there was to be seen, and doing everything there was to be done, we left the boat and scaled the steep hill on which this Canadian summer resort is situated. We entered the parlor of the hotel and, having gained permission, we listened to Mr. C. sing. Strictures Whatever ~~restrictions~~ I may have passed on the singing of our party as a whole, allow me to state that I had no desire to reflect in any way on our soloists. He sang with splendid effect. All was heightened by our surroundings. It seemed so strange

to be way up there overlooking the grandly beautiful St. Lawrence. Far below us rested our boat on the hardly rippled river, extending out like a great lake to the coast of Maine, almost farther than the eye could reach. In another direction from our lofty position we could see nestling in the woods a little lake. And the whole scene bathed in moonlight! Every heart responded to the song.

Once more we are in Quebec. It is six o'clock Monday morning. From that hour till the hour we leave—two o'clock in the afternoon—we crowd into the rapidly flying minutes more pleasure and instruction than would seem possible. I will not attempt to describe it all, I will only mention what all remember so well — The Place d'Armes, Durham and Dufferin Terrace, Governor's Garden, the Ursuline Convent the Esplanade, the Citadel, the Parliament Buildings, the Martello Towers, Wolfe's Monument bearing those fateful words, "Here fell Wolfe victorious;" the Battery and Laval University. I cannot forbear recalling however our visit to the French Cathedral, where a slight fee gave us the privilege of examining the robes of the priests used on state occasions. At sight of each new vestment the girls could not suppress their cries of delight. "Oh is'nt that lovely! Oh! Oh!" was heard on all sides, to the amusement of the gentlemen who felt as if they were at an opening of Jordan and Marsh's rather than in the presence of sacred things.

Our entry into the various stores, bent on shopping, caused a perfect stampede, we bought everything, from a toboggan to a pair of gloves. Hundreds of dollars'worth of "Souvenirs" crossed the line that night, which, thanks to the good fortune

of having a Sunday School superintendent on board, escaped all duty. An Orthodox deacon could not have performed this delicate duty better. And then that group! What maniacs we seemed to the genial photographer.

Dinner at one thirty P. M. What, must we really go!

And then for the first time a feeling of sadness came over us, as we began to realize that we were indeed going home. This was the only mar to our pleasure, the only cloud overhanging the remainder of our trip. Old and experienced boarding-school girls said they never saw anything like the ease with which young girls on board, who had never before been away from their parents had been able to reconcile themselves to the situation. "Why," said one to me, "when I went away to school, we gathered round the piano the first night and sang 'Home, Sweet Home' and cried all the evening." I ventured to ask, "Do you think you would have done so, if you had gone to a school where they believed in co-education?" But I could only extract the naive reply, "The gentlemen of this party have been very kind and thoughtful."

The ride back to Newport was not devoid of incident. Owing to some accident, we had to do without our luxurious Monarch car. However we were easily consoled when we found that our new car had movable seats, for, removing all the seats to one side of the car, we proceeded to dance the Virginia reel, which became a perfect break down as our car with its precious load reeled over the rough and uneven track.

On reaching Newport we found comfortable quarters awaiting us, a few were favored with letters from home and we realized that we were back once more in the United States.

Tuesday was our last day, and we determined to make a day and (as the sequel shows) a night of it.

We began well by going without breakfast, a scheme which is recommended to all travellers desirous of gaining time. The events and incidents of that day are still fresh in our memory. Imagine a girl of charming conversational powers at your side, the occasional interruptions of orchestral music, the stops at various points along this most beautiful of American and Canadian lakes, the air cool and refreshing; and you have a programme which turns a hot July day into Elysium. On our way up the Lake we stopped at the Mountain House and enjoyed a row, at least your historian did, and he cannot be expected to relate in particular the pleasures which he did not enjoy.

Shortly after returning on board there was a cry of "man overboard!" "who is it?" we shouted. "Puncheon," was the answer. Who is Puncheon? well now Puncheon was a most intimate companion of one of the young ladies. I had never known him before by that name, and fearing that some others may be as ignorant, I will give you the name of his younger brother—Vinaigrette. If this should not suffice, I will state that he was a bottle of cologne. Of course the loss of the Puncheon was of more importance than that of a real man would have been, so when it was discovered that the article in question had been left at the Mountain House several volunteered to go after it. It was captured in triumph by Mr. O. and returned to its weeping owner. If our party as a party should ever adopt a crest, I would suggest a puncheon rampant.

But why is Mr. M. so sleepy? Alas that night on the Sague

nay is past and gone. Tuesday is *not* his day. Mr. O. has come in ahead on the home stretch. Mr. M. carefully turns his celluloid collar for the last time and lies down for a nap on the forward deck. But the fates do not smile, he awakens too soon to pay the desired forfeit.

I will not dwell on the dance at the Memphremagog House—because I did not dance. I will not dwell on the storm that drove our boats so suddenly to land—because I did not get wet. I will not dwell on my dreams in the Parlor Car that night—because I did not go to sleep. I will not dwell on that breakfast in Springfield Wednesday morning—because I was not there.

We leave Newport for Springfield at 11.30 P. M. "Go to bed, Holy Shaker, No!" exclaims one of the young ladies. With song and shout most of us pass the last hours of our trip riding down the Connecticut Valley. We breakfast at Windsor at 3 A. M. The coffee wards off all drowsiness. Some of us see the sun rise for the first time. It was a wild, mad ending to our trip.

Greenfield is reached at 6.13 A. M. and your historian is left standing on the platform, wondering what he will write that can possibly interest the crowd who wave adieus from the back platform of the receding car. He craves the indulgence of his companions and suggests as a moral that when we go on another excursion, first, that the historian may know what is expected of him before the last night of the trip; and second, that the discerning and observant mind of girlhood may recall our pleasures and recount our joys, and with greater tact and skill wield the historian's pen.